



Testimony of Pamela Mautte
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The Alliance for Prevention & Wellness is a member of the Connecticut Prevention Network

***H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

*February 23 2017 Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Public Hearing
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Regional Action Council Funding*

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Senator Markley, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee, my name is Pamela Mautte. I am the Director of the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness and a member of the CT Prevention Network. I am here today to strongly oppose the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention network structure.

The Alliance for Prevention & Wellness will not exist to provide the vital prevention services needed in our community with the proposed budget cut. The impact of the proposed cut would dismantle the program and all the work being done to reduce substance abuse, suicide and improve behavioral health systems. The funding used by the Regional Action Councils is crucial to the state and local communities. We are the strategic partner in our communities that utilize our state funds to leverage and match additional funding. These dollars directly impact the communities you serve, because we have been able to invest in local prevention activities.

Currently, we are in the midst of an opioid crisis, and communities have continued to voice the need to expand prevention efforts to help end the epidemic. Today, I ask you to remember the value of prevention and your return on investment. Your return on investment is for every one state dollar you allocate to the Regional Action Councils, we bring in over \$10 in funds, including federal and local that support your communities.

The local prevention activities directly impacting your communities include the following:

- Provided 5,015 youth and 2,406 adults = 7,421 people in FY 15-16.
- Convened 7 community forums on opioids reaching 453 people.
- Convened and coordinate a local opioid work-group.
- Secured funding in 2011, for local police departments to install medication drop boxes, with more than 1,000 lbs. of medication collected in 2016.

- Trained more than 500 people in Mental Health First Aid including local first responders
- Trained educators and school nurses in how to implement and utilize adolescent brief screening and referral assessments and Narcan.

The aforementioned is only a brushstroke of the prevention work being done in your local communities. The Regional Action Councils link local, state, and federal substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion priorities to local and regional initiatives. If this link is broken, our communities will suffer and be left with no resources.

The CT Prevention Network structure is crucial in reaching out and working with all of CT's 169 cities and towns together. We have had numerous successful projects implemented because we have the ability to reach and work with our local communities. These projects include but are not limited to suicide prevention, tobacco prevention, opioid prevention, and implementation of evidence based models.

Decimation of funding will jeopardize the prevention infrastructure Connecticut has built over the past 26 years, a structure that engages citizens at the grassroots level. Connecticut's RAC infrastructure is held up as a model by other states and the federal government. Why would we break an infrastructure that is effective and has a positive return on its investment?

Again, I remind you about the return on investment and provide. We urge you to reject the severe budget cuts to regional action councils and keep in place the current CT Prevention Network structure.

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